



DIETARY SUPPLEMENT FACT SHEET

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Wellness.aspx>

Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)

Also known as: Black snakeroot, Bugwort, Rattle root, Rattlesnake root, and squawroot.

Historical Perspective: Black cohosh, a member of the buttercup family, was first used by Native Americans who introduced it to the colonists. Traditionally, the root of the plant was used for treatment of dysmenorrhea, dyspepsia and rheumatism.

Common Uses: Orally, black cohosh is used for symptoms of menopause and premenstrual syndrome (PMS), as well as for nervous tension, dyspepsia, rheumatism.

Form(s) Used: Black cohosh is most commonly available in capsules, tablets, tinctures, and teas.

Common and/or Recommended dosage: Most studies used doses of 40-80 mg twice daily.

Potential Side Effects: Gastrointestinal upset, rash, headache, dizziness, weight gain, and cramping.

Food-Drug-Supplement Interactions: Black cohosh may increase the toxicity of docetaxel and doxorubicin.

Contraindication to Use: Those who are pregnant should avoid use because black cohosh may stimulate uterine contractions. Women with a history of breast cancer or who are at risk for breast cancer should avoid black cohosh due to the possibility that it may increase the risk of metastasis. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions like uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, endometriosis and uterine fibroids should also avoid consuming black cohosh until further research is conducted.

Research Data on Safety and Efficacy: When used orally and appropriately, black cohosh is likely safe for use up to 6 months. However, it is not safe for use by pregnant or breast-feeding women. Black cohosh may be effective to reduce symptoms of menopause like hot flashes, but it takes 4 weeks of consumption before symptoms are reduced. Studies using black cohosh over long term are still needed. There is insufficient reliable information available about black cohosh's effectiveness for other uses like relieving PMS symptoms.

Bottom-Line: Black cohosh is safe and effective to reduce symptoms of menopause in healthy adult females. Be sure to note the contraindications as mentioned above.

1. The Health Professional's Guide to Popular Dietary Supplements, 2nd Edition. Allison Sarubin Fragakis, MS, RD, The American Dietetic Association. 2003.
2. Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database, 4th Edition. Jeff M. Jellin, Pharm D, Therapeutic Research Facility, 2002